

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 IO-14 ISO-00 ACDA-19 SCI-06 AEC-11

SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01

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R 231825Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8032

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USUN NEW YORK 1587

USMISSION GENEVA

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 13654

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, IAEA

SUBJECT: INDIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD THE NPT

REF: STATE 228113, VIENNA-605

SUMMARY: INDIAN AMBASSADOR JAIPAL'S REMARKS IN THE REFERENCED AIRGRAM INDICATED A POSSIBLE CHANGE AND POSITIVE EVOLUTION IN INDIA'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE NPT. WE HAVE NOTED NO SUCH CHANGE AND BELIEVE JAIPAL IS WIDE OF THE MARK. IN BRIEF, THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT'S AVERSION TO THE NPT CONTINUES TO REFLECT A PERSISTENTLY NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE TREATY AND A POSITIVE INTEREST IN KEEPING OPEN NUCLEAR OPTIONS ON THE PART OF SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS OF THE INDIAN ELITE AND PUBLIC. IN
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INDIA, THIS IS A POLITICAL AND NOT PRIMARILY A TECHNICAL ISSUE.

END SUMMARY.

1. JAIPAL'S ASSERTIONS AND OUR COMMENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(A) INDIA (EXCEPT FOR A FEW DIEHARDS) REALIZES IT CAN'T SPEND THE MONEY FOR SOPHISTICATED DELIVERY SYSTEMS EVEN IF IT DEVELOPED A NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITY;

(B) THERE IS NO SERIOUS INDIAN INTEREST IN DEVELOPING AN INDIGENOUS CAPABILITY FOR INDIA'S OWN PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVES.

COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE COST OF A CONVINCING NUCLEAR DETERRENT MAY HAVE LED SOME INDIAN STRATEGISTS TO WONDER WHETHER THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NUCLEAR STRIKE FORCE WOULD EVER BE A SENSIBLE OPTION, IT HAS NOT COMPLETELY UNDERCUT POLITICALLY RELEVANT INTEREST IN THE OPTION. MRS. GANDHI'S GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO AFFIRM INDIA'S INTEREST IN ULTIMATELY ACHIEVING INDIGENOUS PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE CAPABILITY WHILE ESCHEWING INTEREST IN NUCLEAR WEAPONS. IT HAS GIVEN NO INDICATION OF ANY CHANGE IN THIS POSITION.

(C) JAIPAL IMPLIED THAT THE PROBLEM OF MORE DIFFICULT ACCESS TO FOREIGN NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT PURCHASES WAS BECOMING A MAJOR CONCERN TO THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT WHICH WAS COMING TO REALIZE THAT FAILURE TO RATIFY THE NPT WAS ADDING TO THE DIFFICULTIES OF BRINGING NUCLEAR POWER TO REALITY. THE CANADIAN REFUSAL TO EXPORT CERTAIN KEY ITEMS FOR THE UNSAFEGUARDED MADRAS REACTOR WAS A CASE IN POINT. COMMENT: WE HAVE DETECTED NO INDICATIONS THAT INDIA IS RECONSIDERING ITS POSITION ON THE NPT IN LIGHT OF THE CANADIAN DECISION OR DIFFICULTIES WITH ITS NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAM. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ADMITTED THAT THE CANADIAN DECISION IS CAUSING DIFFICULTIES BUT SAYS IT IS MAKING EFFORTS TO PRODUCE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT FOR THE MADRAS PROJECT INDIGENOUSLY WHERE POSSIBLE AND TO LOCATE ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF SUPPLY ABROAD.

(D) THE ONLY OUTSTANDING CONCERN OF THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT WITH RESPECT TO THE NPT WAS ARTICLE IV -- NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT. REAL PROGRESS IN CARRYING OUT ARTICLE VI MIGHT OFFER THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A CHANGE IN GOI POLICY TOWARD RATIFICATION. COMMENT: INDIAN CONCERNS WITH THE NPT ARE THAT IT IS DISCRIMINATORY; CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT IT DIVIDES THE WORLD PERMANENTLY INTO NUCLEAR POWERS THAT COUNT AND NON-NUCLEAR-WEAPONS STATES (INCLUDING INDIA) THAT DON'T; THAT IT OFFERS NO SOLID GUARANTEE AGAINST NUCLEAR BLACKMAIL; THAT IT IMPOSES SAFEGUARD BURDENS ON DEVELOPING COUNTRIES; THAT THE ONLY WAY TO GET THE FULL BENEFITS OF PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVES IS TO DEVELOP THE TECHNOLOGY YOURSELF; AND SO FORTH. A CONCERN ABOUT THE NEED FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT IS RELEVANT, BUT IT IS MOST UNLIKELY (PARTICULARLY WITH CHINA

NEXT DOOR) THAT STEPS DERIVING FROM SALT WOULD ALTER INDIA'S SOMEWHAT VISCERAL SUSPICIONS IN THIS AREA. POLITICALLY RELEVANT FEELING HERE HAS NOT FOCUSSED SHARPLY ON THE DISARMAMENT QUESTION IN TERMS OF NPT ARTICLE VI COMMITMENTS.

(E) IT MIGHT BE WISE TO INVITE CERTAIN NON-PARTIES TO THE NPT, SUCH AS INDIA, TO ATTEND THE NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE AS OBSERVERS. COMMENT: INVITING INDIA (AND WE ASSUME THIS WOULD MEAN ALL NON-PARTIES) TO THE REVIEW CONFERENCE MIGHT PROVIDE ANYONE WITHIN THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT WHOMIGHT FAVOR THE NPT WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO ADVANCE THEIR CASE. BUT WE COULD NOT GUARANTEE THAT INDIA WOULD NOT USE THE OPPORTUNITY TO THROW SAND IN THE CONFERENCE GEARS IF IT COULD. WE ASSUME WASHINGTON WILL REVIEW THIS QUESTION IN LIGHT OF A BROAD COMPLEX OF NPT ISSUES AS 1975 APPROACHES.

2. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL WHO IS THOROUGHLY CONVERSANT WITH THE SUBJECT TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER THIS WEEK THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE OR REEVALUATION IN THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON THE NPT.

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